

Newark Resident Donates Hancock Letter to the Delaware Public Archives



A letter that John Hancock wrote to the Delaware General Assembly in 1776 has been donated to the Delaware Public Archives by Newark resident Robert Barnes who found it in one of the books he purchased at an auction.

Hancock, who was then the President of the Continental Congress, wrote to request that Delaware send more men and supplies before the Battle at Princeton.

Although the document was in pieces, Barnes spotted the familiar signature of John Hancock. As a frequent researcher at the Delaware Public Archives, Barnes contacted the Archives for advice once he realized he had an important part of Delaware history.

“We thank Mr. Barnes for having contacted us after he found the letter,” said Secretary of State Jeffrey Bullock. “We will now be able to share this newly-acquired piece of Delaware history with the public.”

The letter, dated December 30, 1776, was written by Hancock to the Delaware General Assembly during the critical days following Washington’s victory at Trenton. Hancock was requesting Delaware to send more men and supplies because of the “Strength and Progress of the Enemy.” On the reverse side of the letter, Hancock acknowledged the Trenton victory by

noting: "I congratulate you on the success of General Washington in the Jerseys."



"The letter will become a permanent part of our Legislative Papers collection, and we are making plans to make it accessible online in the near future." said State Archivist and Delaware Public Archives Director Stephen Marz.

"The letter is now where it belongs," said Barnes.

The document was sent to the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts in Philadelphia where it underwent preservation, in preparation for its display at the Public Archives.

The Delaware Public Archives is one of the oldest public archives programs in the country. DPA holds more than 95,000 cubic feet of government records and historical documents. One of the missions of the Archives is to ensure access to public records for present and future generations of Delawareans.